Fleischbank (S.E. face). Predigstuhl, W. face; also N. peak of same, Totenkirchl (W. face), Winkler-Stabeler-Delago Türme (traverse), Guglia di Brenta ('Preuss' route). Croz' del Altissimo (W. face), Rosengartenspitze (N. face). Also some peaks in Maritimes.

Of the world-catastrophe of February 17 of this year, it is unnecessary to speak at length. It is clear to every mountaineer that the disaster on that lamentable Meuse pinnacle was a pure accident—an Act of God. Such have occurred and will continue to occur. That His Majesty—an expert in descents *en rappel*—took every precaution is evidenced by the presence of a long rope. It is certain either that the latter slipped off the rock hitch, or that the hitch itself gave way. It is equally clear that death was mercifully instantaneous. . . .

The hazard underlying the fatality that has thrown all Europe into grief and mourning is as manifest to the world as the fact that as a ruler, as a soldier and as a mountaineer, King Albert of the Belgians belongs to the Immortals for all time.

From Titlis to Bitlis.

By W. RICKMER RICKMERS.

IN the Swiss Alps the Titlis (3239 m.; first ascended by J. Hess and companions in 1744) raises her glittering crown over the vast expanse of majestic peaks from Tyrol to Savoy. Many have aspired to her wuthering heights (I cannot find 'to wuther' in the Oxford Dictionary, but it sounds poetically familiar), some have succeeded, more have failed, and most have never tried. So she stands, a landmark among mountains.

On the bleak highlands of Armenia, nestling in the folds of barren hills, lies Bitlis (1560 m., W. of Lake Van, in the Turkish vilayet of the same name). The stark crater of Nimrud (2919 m.) invites the heroic effort of the climber, and in winter the icy drifts of storm-swept snow tempt the hardy ski-runner.

A vast vista indeed unrolled before the imagination of the ambitious traveller who would fain encompass with his stride

this array of numberless interesting propositions. My revered teacher in the Correspondence School for Popular Poets has impressed my consciousness with the fact that a good title without an essay is better by far than the best essay with no title at all.

Hence the gentle reader of this alliterative age will betray no surprise whatever when I tell him that I have never been near the Titlis. My next best to it was the Tödi. But nothing rhymes so happily with Bitlis. Nor did I ever reach Bitlis. But it rhymes so well with Titlis. In fact, they rhyme with each other.

So everything in this narrative is strictly true, excepting the title which merely presents the terminal points of an ordinate or line of reference traversing the field of oromaniacal vision. It will ease our task if we do not begin at the Titlis, but say, at Sofia. And it will also simplify matters if we shorten the other end by the last 300 miles to Bitlis. Furthermore I may be granted the privilege of turning topographical alignment into a chronological sequence from Batum to the Balkans, for I began with Lazistan in 1894 and finished with Bulgaria in 1933. Transforming one concise formula into another we obtain 'Tit-Bits between Armenia and the Alps.' This will, I trust, remove possible doubts engendered by the relativity of space and time. A little Einstein goes a long way towards changing the lays of a liar into the lie of the land.

Let your mind's eye sweep back to the innocent and late Victorian year 1894. Watch a youth, pickaxe in hand and a rope slung aslant his still slender waist, wending his way with elastic steps through the motley crowd infesting the platforms of the Nordbahnhof at Vienna. This station, where the East began in earnest, has since been made into a ski-jump with artificial snow. Owing to the advance of the Orient upon the Occident the railway has become obsolete. The reader will have guessed by now that the misguided youth was I on my way to the Frosty Caucasus.

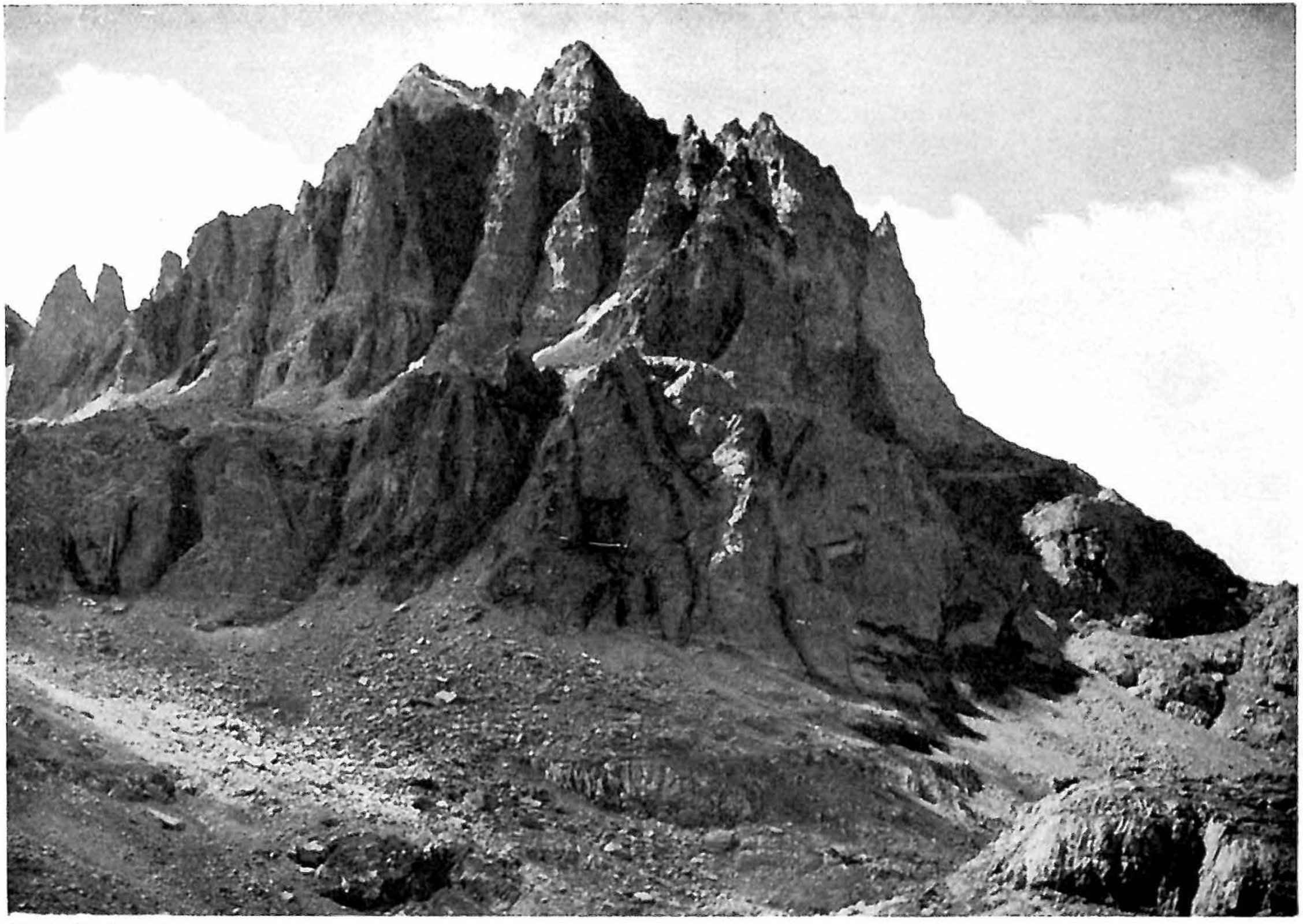
I need not dwell upon my impressions of Russia forty years ago. What then was damnation-muttering annoyance at a few simple passport formalities or the inquisitive zeal of the village policeman now seems like childish petulance over some slight discomfort. Mere bother has become a nightmare of red tape, want of encouragement an invitation to stay away, civilization tempered by incompetence, Utopia gone wrong after having stamped out the last taint of romance. The theory of rationalized life gone cracked is best illustrated by

the fact that an all-powerful government has not yet seen fit to create a single national park or nature reserve.

From Odessa I took the boat along the coast. Off Yalta, now Redarmyborough, I saw the tip of the Ai Petri peep over the dark pines of the Yaila range. As anything below 3000 m. was in those days beneath contempt, my curiosity in the Ai Petri (1316 m.) was not aroused till thirty years later, when the opportunity of visiting them had gone, as usual. For me these limestone crags have thus become a sort of mystery peak. The only picture I ever saw in a Russian guide-book shows a truly Alpine view suggesting a fake.

Elbruz and the Western range remained invisible, but on approaching Batum my imagination was fired by glimpses of the Karchkhal peaks through the mist. Here was something nobody had ever written about—that is to say, something not yet seen officially against the common background of printed paper, however great the number of private views including those of the surveyors. True, the name was on the Russian map, but the district never suggested anything but wooded hills. To the likes of us the word 'mountain' remains a nondescript, a mere swelling, until reported and appraised by a mountaineer. We have fallen into the habit of judging raised features from the maximum downwards. Everest, The Mountain, is the absolute positive with the level sea as the absolute negative. Somewhere in between wavers the zero line dividing plus-mountains from the minus-mountains. This line bears no fixed relation to height which follows the ordinary or scientific way of starting from the bottom. Napes Needle is more than a molehill in Tibet fourteen thousand feet higher. Towards climbable earth we are not scientists but impressionists. This explains why the census of mountains had to be gone all over again. Long before Paccard and Saussure the map of the world was teeming with mighty ranges. But to the climber, who created a new popular awareness of high places, they were practically non-existent or mere hints of something that might be found there.

Yet all these peaks had been seen before by traders, sea captains, warriors, scholars and topographers. By rights surveyors should have been the first founders of Alpine clubs, but they were the last to join. Evidently their professional eye showed them nothing but ugly scars on a useful landscape. Compare Humboldt and Whymper who visited and painted the same Ecuadorian Andes nearly a hundred years apart. Both climbed. Yet what a difference to us, although Whymper



Photo, Dr. Lentelt.

A Peak in the Pontic Range.

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Photo, Dr. Lentelt.]

CRAGS OF KAVRON.

did not really add much to the general aspect of those icy ranges shown on Humboldt's pictures. The former saw things that might be climbed ; the latter climbed in order to see, although we must not deny him the spirit of adventure.

The urge towards a height is as old as man. The early heroes, who rarely reached a top, enjoyed a tremendous sensational advantage over us because they grappled with the unknown. Their courage was more praiseworthy than ours. For us books and familiarity bred by mass-suggestion have drawn the veil, even before we start to practise. The mystical horror has gone ; and the beginner expects difficulties neither better nor worse than on a high scaffolding, in a sailing boat or in boxing. To him the old hand is merely an expert and instructor, not a high priest, on intimate terms with the gods. If you wish to feel that vast superiority over unblushing fear, you must pick your man from the plains of Russia and take him up a mild ridge in the Dolomites. On the way down, having lowered him by the rope, follow him with detached mien and, if possible, light your pipe in the middle of an easy chimney.

And all that explains our joy when we suddenly strike a he-mountain in the unknown. It is my mountain. It was revealed to me before all men. They saw it, but with unseeing eye. For our vision has created another shape. The god of terror has become a god to grapple with. We stand in awe, but no longer in dread.

Karchkhal promised an alluring contrast to the fetid dankness of Batum. But not a single man of this fever-ridden community had even heard of it, leaving me aghast at an unbelievable state of mind. The holiday dreams, rarely realized, of hundreds of merchants, officials and officers pictured the spas of Piatigorsk or Switzerland, whereas with a little enterprise, a little road-mending and house-building, they could have founded a health resort nearby. A semblance of Darjeeling might have arisen amid the grandeur of peaks and virgin forests, with pure water from the springs and fresh milk from the alps, with trout fishing, bear shooting and climbing for the more adventurous.

However good these people may have been at their calling, their lack of imagination was deplorable when it came to finding means of recuperation and amusement. A British colony would have been simply tickled to death by the idea that a journey of forty miles—a day by carriage and on horseback—could provide them with a bracing contrast to semi-tropical rot. Wherever Englishmen forgathered abroad they showed a mind equably balanced between business and play.

'How do I make money in this beastly place?' was at once followed by 'How do I get some sport out of it?' They brought home hockey on horseback, invented mountaineering and for all I know held fashionable winter sports on the sand dunes of the Lybian desert. With sufficient despair owing to no other outlet they would have tried shark-sticking at Aden. The Continental word for this was 'spleen.' Whenever you saw anybody tossing little white balls over a net or trying to catch fish with a fly, they were *spleenige Engländer*. This spleen has created an enormous business of sport and travel all the world over. As I write these lines other nations are doing their best to out-spleen the original spleeners.

But I did have a predecessor. From Freshfield I heard of Peacock, British Consul at Batum, who had died in Odessa before my time. I was able to track Peacock's widow, a daughter of the great Russian revolutionary Bakunin. She replied to my letter that her husband had indeed visited the Karchkhal mountains, but that his diaries had been lost in a fire. In Batum I picked up Grigor Makandaroff, a young Georgian, who became my interpreter and faithful servant on many expeditions to the Caucasus and Turkistan. Besides Russian and French he spoke a dozen Eastern languages and dialects. A Russian friend also joined me.

Before we start let us glance at the country. For more than two thousand years the coast lands of the Black Sea between Rize and Batum have been known as Lazia (Lazistan), which is the southern sector of ancient Colchis. Climate offers the most exact definition of Colchis as the subtropical coast belt with a luxuriant vegetation. The residents of Batum spoke of the natives as 'Turks,' no doubt because they were Mohammedans, often understood Osmanli and had been Turkish subjects before the treaty of San Stefano. This corresponds to the bad old habit of calling every coloured fellow a nigger. These folk in brown homespuns, coming to town from the hills, were Ajars.

The Ajars and Lazis belong to the Mingrelian family of the Georgian (Karthlian) race, the former more particularly to the Gurian branch. Thus the Mingrelian language holds sway from Rize to Batum. For the last three hundred years these outposts of Georgia have professed Islam, which explains the name of Turkish Georgia given by Russian writers to Greater Lazia (Ajaristan and Lazistan proper). The territory of these tribes reaches from thirty to sixty miles inland. The Chorokh river always formed the conventional boundary between Lazistan

Photo, W. R. Rickmers.]

KARCHKHAL, CENTRAL GROUP.

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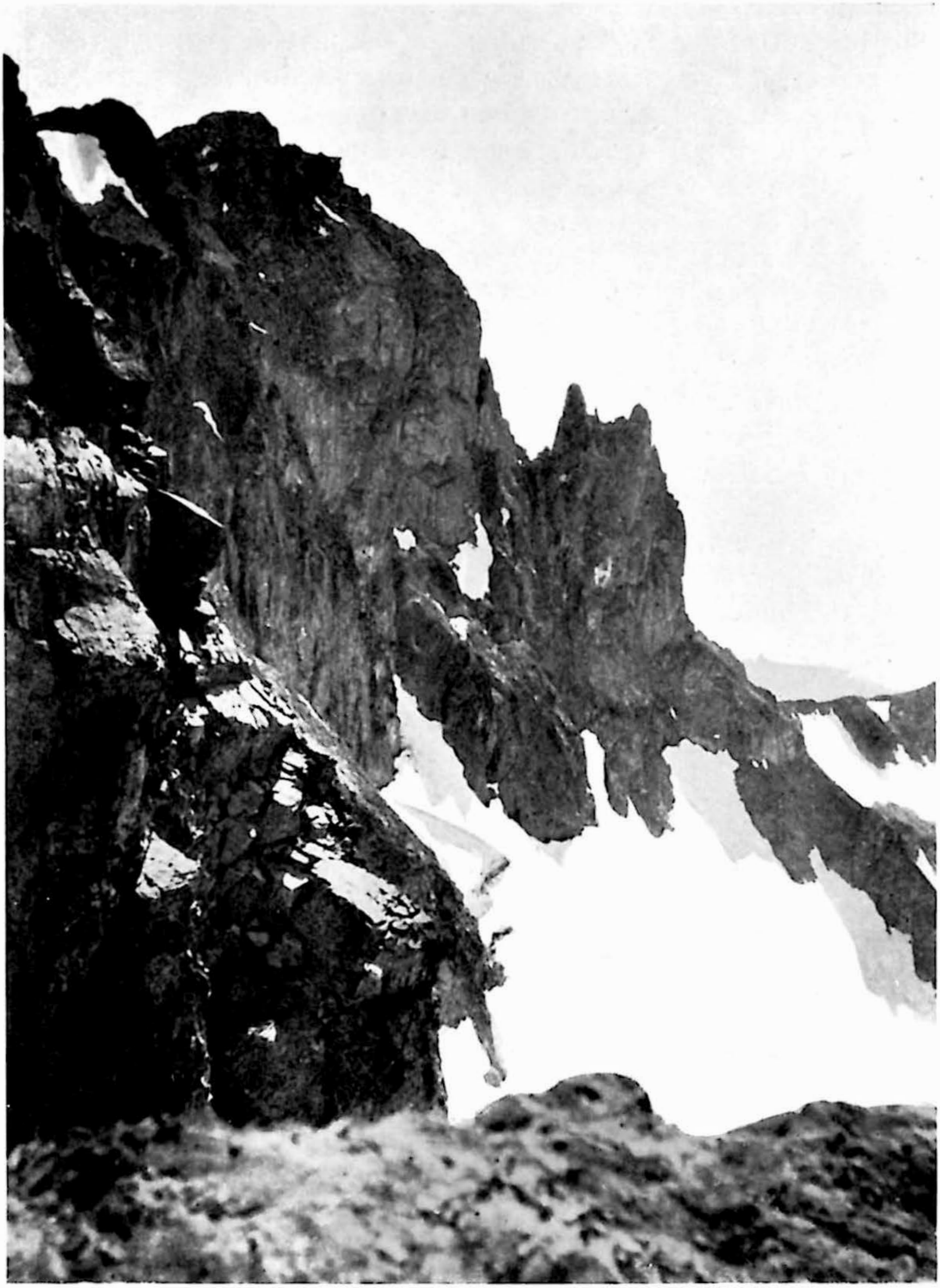

Photo, W. R. Rickmers.]

THE TEETH OF THE GLACIER (KARCHKHAL).

and Ajaristan, the more so in modern days when it separated Turkish from Russian subjects. Since the war they have been united under Turkish rule. So we have to do with true Caucasians whose mode of life has been moulded by Islam. Contact with the sea, and therefore with the outer world, has worked out the real difference between the Ajars and the Lazis. The former are rough mountaineers, the latter great sailors, travellers and men of the world.

Conventional division by rivers makes the Chorokh separate the Pontic range from the Anticaucasus, although structurally the crinkled counterscarp to the Great Caucasus runs from Paphlagonia to the Caspian. Thus the elongated shape of Lazistan belongs to the Pontic system, and Ajaria, round and tumbled like a stork's nest, to Transcaucasia. The highest peaks in each are Kavron dagh and Karchkhal, both about 3800 m.[1] In the Colchian lowlands rhododendron jungle fills the spaces between maize fields and fruit gardens. Magnificent forest covers the upper hills. Here and there the green surge is broken by rocky crests averaging 10,000 ft.

At the appointed hour of four in the morning I sat on the steps of the unforgettable ' Hôtel de France ' at Batum waiting for the carriage that was to take us to Artvin on the Chorokh. The view being hemmed in by shanties, I watched the battle glorious and everlasting between the stinks and the fragrance of the eternal East. It was seven when

> At Belgrave's once upon a time,
> There stood a phaeton sublime—

namely, a hackney carriage with four horses abreast and licensed for any load squeezable into it. By natural selection the victoria of elegance had become the ordinary means of travel by road. It was light, it had springs, it charged boulders, mire, fords and slants. Nothing better could have been invented. Side-trips and the crossing of the Yalanuz range apart, we drove by phaeton through the whole of Transcaucasia between the railway and Ararat. I was now beginning to learn that time expands in hot countries and demands enormous leverage for its compression. That is to say you must kick, cajole, bribe or otherwise persuade your hired transport before the break of dawn. And in order to rout it out you must know where it hides. The Oriental idea of catching a train punctually is to lie in wait for it at a likely place called a station. You

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[1] The map with Lynch's ' Armenia ' gives a plastic idea.

must have faith in things meeting you half-way somewhere. Of course, these people live by a natural or animal time and cannot understand our mechanical clock-time divisible into exact parts. To them our seconds are metaphysical fictions. Watches are merely jewellery or medals of the boastful, for they impudently assert that the sun of Allah rises haphazard. The clock expresses the fundamental difference between Orient and Occident. Without the tick of Greenwich exact machinery and rationalized life would be unthinkable. But perhaps the little rude boy of the West with his hatful of tricks has only stolen a short march upon the wise men of the East.

I can imagine carefree adventure without the luggage of civilization. Ibn Batuta, the greatest of all land travellers, who covered 70,000 miles, probably left home and returned with a pair of saddle-bags. One half of our camp gear and stores is due to the fear of preventible diseases and those curable by surgery. It does not matter much whether rheumatism plagues you at home or abroad, or where you die of cancer. But maddening is the thought of a tooth without a dentist or an appendix without a surgeon. Specific drugs, surgery and protection from chill, insects or dangerous dirt form the irreducible essence distilled from a thousand years of science. The tree of knowledge is buzzing with innumerable fears. The word 'bugbear' sums it all up. Bug derives from bwg, bwgwth, bocan, pucka (Puck) meaning a sprite, hob-goblin, bogey or object of terror. A drive of twenty-five miles brought us to Kvintaur, where we spent the night in a Russian dak-bungalow for chain-gangs. Here the dreams of peaks and bears fled before the presence of bugs. The platoid lectularians were suffering from a famine of prisoners. In those days I travelled native without a tent or sleeping-bag, although nailed boots, rucksack and axe made me stand out from the rest of mankind. Since then the weight of luggage has grown with the weight of years, the great aim being independence of heart-felt but biteful hospitality, not to mention the nightmare of retreats which attract and repel you with equal force. But after my first Caucasian summer fleas and bugs have been held at bay by insect powder. Many people seem to consider it a household remedy of the slums without particular virtue. It must however be genuine and, like gunpowder, it must be kept dry.

One of these prison-stages has remained a vivid memory. It lay on the road from Borzhom to Akhaltsikh. Passing it one night I found a young soldier shot through the heart. A Caucasian giant had knocked down the inside warders with

his manacled hands, seized a rifle, shot the outside guard and fled into the forest with his fellow-prisoners. There lives nothing more dangerous than a Caucasian highlander threatened of his freedom. I have often speculated upon the fact that not all mountain tribes are brave mountaineers ready with dagger and rifle. How do the relations between surroundings and character work out? Whom did the mountains pep, whom did they cow?

I must really speed up this pilgrim's progress. But one has to wait for horses. When ours arrived in the afternoon of the next day we rode to the village of Kvartskhana, which later became the headquarters of an English copper-mining company now defunct. The next wait of about three hours was for supper. A sheep has to be found, killed and roasted; rice must be found, cleaned and cooked. The guest is honoured by a meal specially prepared. The best plan is to lie down at once after the reception ceremonial and sleep until called.

In the West we have lost the art of feeding and bedding the unexpected visitor at a moment's notice, for with us three hours have long ceased to be 'half a mo.' Our second-synchronized brain gets muddled when faced with sudden claims; and the messenger of Allah may have left before we get anything ready. Only the houses of the rich are in a state of permanent and automatic welcome. Moreover our mind is caught in the trammels of specialization. A day-room cannot be a night-room; and we need at least six different cups and glasses for various kinds of drink. Here our host has one beaker for the whole family; a quilt on the carpet is our bed. We Europeans are naked worms encased in the structure of civilization. We cannot travel far without carrying blocks of our coral home. Yet this huge machinery has a flaw, or why should we pack so many spares even for a night in Birmingham? Because a broken collar stud or a blunt razor-blade on a Sunday morning threatens us with heart failure. We have lost our grip on things; multiplicity is swamping us. Hence this feverish attempt at regaining control by organization. We are just now passing through the age of re-standardization. The Eskimos, the Kirghiz, the Arabs, the Papuans and the jungle folk, these are (or were) really standardized. They make their things *do*. I carried formidable weapons all my life, but killed most of my game with a gun or rifle kindly lent. And the only time when I badly needed my pistol was when I had left it behind in a changed coat.

The white man's burden, so beautifully sung, is really the

white man trying to unload his rubbish. All the same I shall not travel without camera, electric torch, hot-water bottle, axe, rope, medicines, and two hundred other things without which one feels unsafe or unhappy in an emergency. Yet I might go much further afield with the clothes I stand in and a moderate sum. To tell the truth, we are slaves and cowards unable to face a soiled collar, both ways, our own and the other man's. That is to say we also form a society for the mutual obstruction of travel. In the East a wayfarer is expected to be dirty and dilapidated. With us the happy solution would be an international travellers' uniform of uncompromising hue. Invent your own meanwhile, for throughout the world anything that resembles a uniform is accepted as the hallmark of some fraternity exempt from the change of dress. The secret of a scout's mobility is that he can go to dine with the Viceroy without bothering his head about what to wear. With a scrubbs and one hightum you will be safe for anything, from an Arctic blubber feast to the tables of royalty. Moreover your Sunday best can take homely rank later, whereas your tail-coat will not even make a bathing-suit.

What about a move towards our first mountain? Is this the ALPINE JOURNAL or the *Hibbert Journal*? Well, next morning we rode through dripping forest to a yaila or dairy-alp on the upper pastures. To my dying day I shall remember those grand beeches with their crowns soughing in the western gale. And higher up, the pillars of Nordmann's noble fir. The Colchian mountain forest from Tuapse to Rize is the last rim left of the virgin forests that once covered half of Europe. All we know of these near home is from a few small and mangy samples traversed by paths for sightseers. Our fast dwindling band of climbers will be the last to have set eyes upon the marvels of the Western Caucasus where hoary trees, the castled knighthood of Suanetia and the last of the bisons bade us welcome in the Middle Ages.

The bison have been slaughtered like so much vermin; the Suanetians are modernized, and the trees would be vanishing fast, were it not for the slump in the timber market. Those on Turkish territory have been recommended to the mercy of Kemal Pasha. Near the timber-line the rhododendron was still ablaze, and on the upper commons sprayed with mist, clumps of azalea mimicked the broom.

So at last we came to the yaila, a cluster of chalets at first indistinguishable from the Swiss or Tyrolese summer camp. A close view shows huts less carefully built, deeper mire and a

denser growth of sorrel. And then, of course, the silly hubbub of the women playing their traditional comedy of shrieking nymphs scurrying from a party of raiders. Our woman-haters will realize here that the stray huntress is as nothing compared with a female population trained to be a passive nuisance, and not only that, but a positive danger to the unwary.

We poor climbers especially are supposed to search for gold and to covet lousy flesh in filthy rags. The Ghazi's campaign against this infernal and degrading nuisance means a truly social reform. When I saw the gay streets of Istanbul last year, I felt as if an incubus had been lifted from them. Even in remote provincial towns one notices beginnings. Slowly but surely the movement is spread by the simple stratagem that servants of the state dare not admit ownership of women in sacks. Hoarded women gather dirt upon themselves and their surroundings. Circulated in the open they titivate, for thus they form part of the self-run works of public education.

Well, having settled this problem, we tackle our mountain at two o'clock after a restless half-night far from the thoughts of women but in virtuous touch with the reality of fleas. The unearthly hour is explained by my wish to impress the others with the stern discipline of our sport. An easy arrangement of screes and rocks formed the south-eastern promontory (Artvin peak) of Karchkhal. On the top we found a cairn which may have been built by Peacock.

Our next climb was Ararat by the usual route and accompanied by nearly the whole garrison of Aralykh. I treadmilled to the summit with Pozharski, an officer of the 'Creeping' Cossacks (Plastuni). On the way down he got badly pinched by one of those lava blocks which rest insecurely upon the screes and which make the mountain side look like a dump of burnt-out coke. He suffered from the hurt for many years.

Ararat was always a dangerous mountain, thanks to the Kurds; and to-day it is simply impossible as the centre of a playground where the disturbers of peace frisk with the restorers of order. So the tourist stands an equal chance of finding his inside clogged by the lead of liberty or the lead of the law. Like the early ascents of Mont Blanc those of Ararat [2] can still be counted. I reckon about thirty up till now, all of them by Europeans and perhaps one or two by highly sophisticated Georgians. Here we have a cone, the ideal mountain, gloriously alone, flashing the rays of her icy beacon for hundreds of miles

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[2] See *A.J.* **8,** 208–21.

around to a million men. Philosophers and emperors climbed Etna or Vesuvius, but after a shipwrecked Noah no legend tells of adventurers on Ararat.

Fujiyama had been climbed by countless worshippers before any European ever heard of it. Fuji and Ararat embody the two types of holy mountain, the peak of pilgrimage and the peak of stay below. On one the God of Endeavour sits enthroned, on the other the God of Fatality.

During their century of occupation the Russians have missed the opportunity, easy and unique, of the highest meteorological observatory outside the Americas.

In 1895 I returned to Karchkhal with my friend Hacker, a hefty cragsman and ski-runner who in 1912 was killed with eleven others by an avalanche on the Schneeberg near Vienna. We did for nearly every pinnacle including the highest (Batum peak, *ca.* 3800 m.) and discovered a remarkable corrie-glacier. Owing to much rain we had to retire for days on end to a hut of the yaila, where the time was passed with cookery, for Hacker was a perfect Voisin. Master and scullion beguiled the weary hours between meals with the preparation of elaborate dishes from scrambled blood or brain boiled with herbs to tenderloin baked in a jacket of dough.

Our lower base was Otingo, a primitive watering-place in the forest. The hot spring had been captured centuries ago by the ancient Georgians, who also built a paved road, stone bridges and chapels. The ruins of a Christian chapel nearby testify to a constant stream of visitors. During our stay several Armenian families from Artvin spent their holidays up here. No Russians ever appeared, but Harry Runge turned up as an honoured guest. I made this the occasion of a big tamasha. Forty warriors, many of them outlaws, arrived at my bidding, clad in their smart homespuns with bashlik worn turban-wise, with rifle, pistol and cartridge belt. They feasted on many sheep and danced round the fire.

When we first came to Otingo we found the bath-house guarded by two men ready for gun-play. Their ladies were disporting themselves inside. For hours the gunmen spelt a stern ' Occupied ' until wily Makandaroff spied and removed a plug in the wall. The gushing stream soon left the ladies to shivering drought. No harm was done as long as we did not *look* at them. After waiting two hours for the basin to refill, we were able to enjoy our wash.

When I took my wife to Suanetia in 1900, we must needs look up good old Karchkhal. The old love never dies. She may

not be the fit subject of high ambition, but that is just what saves her from causing disappointment. What she gives makes us quietly and thankfully happy. Another old love of mine—not the exotic stranger but little Madge at home—is the Dents du Midi, the temptress. How utterly hackneyed she seems. Think of her innumerable pictures with Chillon in the foreground. She is something to all men. Yet to me she is something for me alone. The queenly harlots of the Alps own the secret of undying virginity.

Close upon forty years had passed after my maiden trip to Asia before I saw Lazia again. Why so long a lapse? The Pamirs had claimed me. And presently all of us had been claimed by the human fool everlasting. The Unspeakable Episode had swept the board and left mankind poor. So travellers had to revert to their fundamental type, to the gipsy. The scout, the hiker, the 'wander-bird' filled the stage of roving adventure. Unfortunately very many of them drifted into genteel beggary, tempted by the generous hospitality offered to youngsters facing the terrors of a foreign land with songs to a guitar. The talk went round that a soft job was going. The small clutches of youngsters rapidly multiplied into swarms of hulking fellows in boyish make-up, with stubbly whiskers and bleached lion's manes, flat or permanently waved, and a cabaret turn ready to burst from their gullets. Plausible tramps infested Southern Europe and the Near East as the settled plague of the consulates and their countrymen abroad. Versailles sums up why two-thirds of them were Germans. Explorers young and old, myself among them, sifted the maps inch by inch for white or at least greyish spots as near home as possible so as to be within range of financial horse-power. The dynamics of the purse gave but a short radius of action. Began the great gleaning which yielded thousands of oddments from the middle distance.

Hence I felt but mildly surprised when I was asked to join in a raid on Lazistan. There exists in Germany a campers' club noted for discipline, dignity and comradeship, the Brecht-Bergen Scouts, built up by their leader, the Professor, in the course of twenty years. I had met them in Spain. For 300 marks (£25) they offered a round of six weeks from Munich through the Balkans to Lazistan and back through Russia. Only co-operation makes such a thing possible. Elbow-grease, stamina and a temper (nearly) unrumpleable form the major contribution to the common fund. We have to work hard. There are loads to carry, there is kitchen duty and there are the

watches of the night. But against the comforts of the pampered we exchange freedom and the unlimited possibilities of the third class or the steamer's deck. We eat our meals when we need them, conjuring them up from a box full of foods, pots and pans, and a stove. We never go thirsty, for we know that the locomotive is full of boiling water for tea. The driver will be ready to oblige our little witch. And a hidden tap of the donkey-engine yields shaving water softened by grease.

There were eleven of us including the leader Professor Brecht-Bergen, a schoolmaster whose real mission in life seems to be the scientific playing of the great Wild West game, the dream of every right-minded boy between six and seventy-six. Since 1911 he has led his storm-troopers to the Pripet swamps, the Ural mountains, the Caucasus, Spain, Marrakech (Atlas), Lapland and Asia Minor. Their best record (1933) was the crossing of Lapland, with folding canoes, from Kirkenes on the Polar Sea to Kemi on the Baltic.

Some years ago they hired a Turkish barge, manned it themselves and sailed the Sea of Marmara. On the shores of one of the Princes' Islands one night the camp was invaded by nymphs in true Odyssean style. Their whispers merged into the whisperings of wind and wave. Next morning the mother superior of a high-class school for Greek young ladies paid a visit in state to complain. But the leader refused to be made responsible for bounds broken or bonds tied by a rival gang.

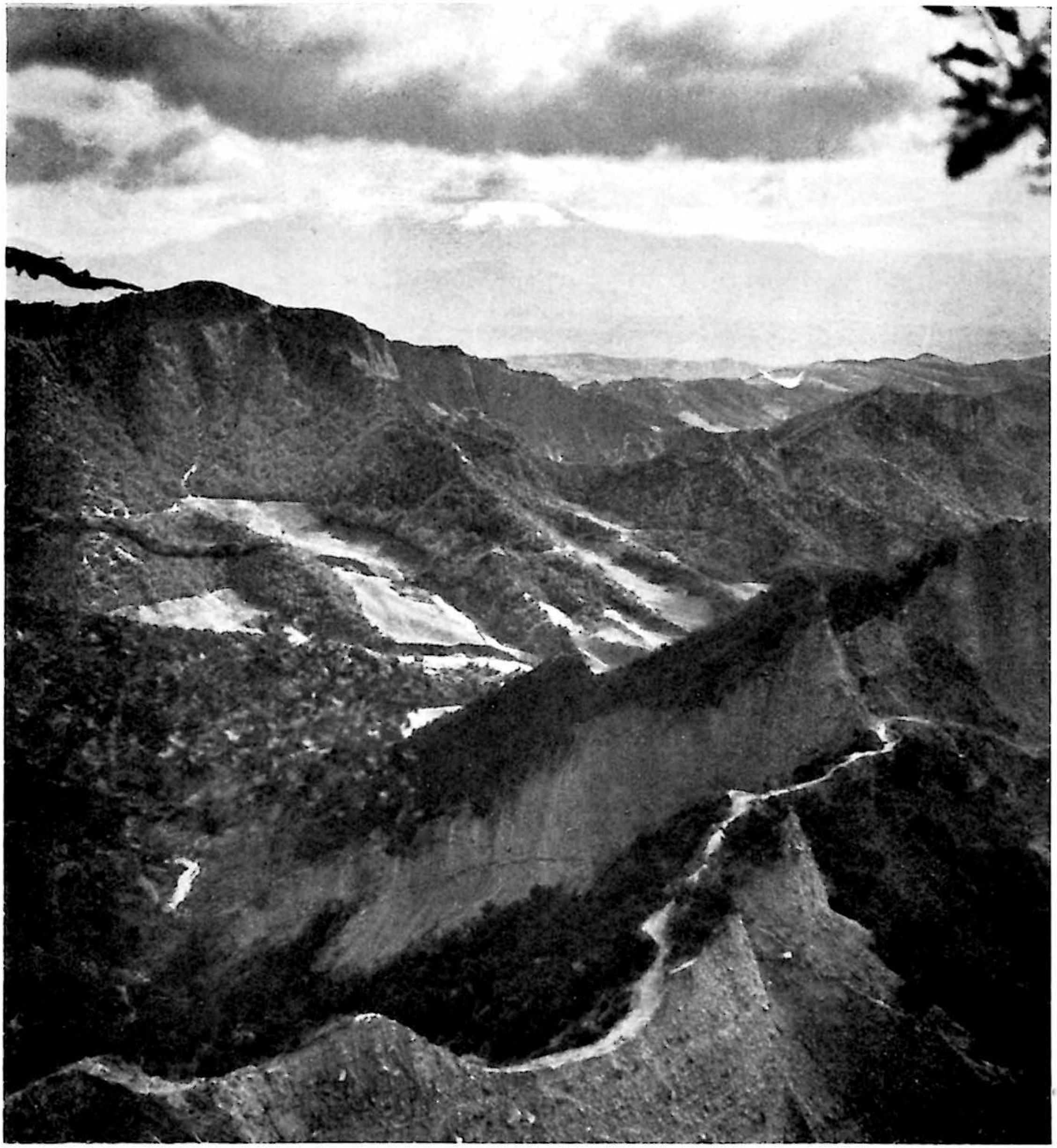
Lazistan meant a new and successful experiment, inasmuch as we had two women with us, the wife of a husband who also ran, and the leader's niece, a slip of a girl with a rucksack twice her size. Both filled me with awe of the new breed. Modern youth is said to be somewhat rough-hewn. Yet everybody made allowance for senile decrepitude and relieved me of many a job. Somehow I survived. But a row of new holes punched in my belt bore witness to the reduction of curved space with a corresponding increase of self-esteem.

This was the second time that Father Break-the-Mountains came to the wilds of the Lazis. In 1930 the discoveries of his scouts opened the floodgates of a regular migration of climbers mainly represented by four groups of Austrians under Krenek, Leutelt, Köberle and Haltmar. It shows how badly needed was an outlet for minor exploration, especially after the sealing up of the great Caucasus. The union of forest and mountain appeals to Nordics, the approaches are cheap (Danube, Black Sea), the natives take kindly to visitors, and the Turkish Government observes a benevolent attitude. There is still a

Photo, W. R. Rickmers.]

THE CONGLOMERATES OF MELNIK.

[*To face p.* 294



Photo, W. R. Rickmers.]

THE WILDS OF MACEDONIA.

lot to be gained by nosing about, for the country has never been dealt with to plan. Our knowledge consists of fragments. Even Russian Ajaristan (Radde, Countess Uvarova) received but an infinitesimal share of the official scientific endeavour devoted to the whole of Caucasia.

In Munich I met by chance two young men who had tramped in Lazistan, Fochler-Hauke and Kulzer. The latter, an entomologist, also served in the Georgian Legion, a Lazi guerilla detachment against the Russians. The earliest of modern travellers was Karl Koch, who crossed the ranges to and fro in 1843. Before him we have only the voyage of the Greek cruiser 'Argo.' But the blue-book tells us little beyond the atrocities of Admiral Jason and his crew.

In Istanbul I marvelled at the bobbed and silken butterflies burst from the dormant pupae of Islam; and I petted the happy family cats which have replaced the public dogs of former days, famous but wretched.

We landed at Rize on the gloomy coast where the rainfall equals that of the English Lakes, but seems more, perhaps owing to a more even sprinkle from the spongy sky. Everything grows thickly in this moist and tepid air. It is easy to grow what you need, but difficult to keep under what you do not want.

The forest has been cut down within a day's journey from the coast; and the foothills look the same as Koch describes them a hundred years ago. Considering the small needs of the present population, the regeneration of timber could undoubtedly have kept pace with the turnover of centuries, were it not for the weeds. These take the shape of ununderecrawlable rhododendron jungle fifteen feet high which stifles saplings of the nobler breed. It suffers only bushy or twining associates like hazel, blackberry, bay-laurel, holly, cotoneaster, privet, ivy, smilax, clematis and big ferns.

I see in these forests a relic of the ice age. Hardy trees had claimed the ground before the arrival of subtropical undergrowth. Once felled the trees cannot spring up again without the help of the forester. Interference by man meant the loss of positions and a withdrawal of the lower timber-line. This forest fights on two fronts. Maybe the axe only speeded a natural selection according to climatic levels. The jungle advanced slowly by killing the young while waiting for the veterans to die. At a height, where the air is cooler, the battle wages fair, unless lumbermen play havoc by the square mile. Realms find their levels natural or man-made.

Rize is inhabited by 5000 men, women and children and five million bugs. We camped outside the town under a mighty plane tree by the side of a crumbling coffee-house which served as messroom in a downpour. One night two of the party were nearly drowned in their tent because they had not reckoned with a sea wall which dammed the spates of a cloudburst. Here our behaviour towards water seems paradoxical. We hate it as rain, yet soak in the Black Sea for hours on end. Two mules were hired for the heavy kit. Foodstuffs included rusks locally made, as well as a good supply of hazel-nuts and raisins, which form the usual pocket lunch of the scout. We are in the midst of the hazel country where grow the sweetest and oiliest of filberts, now the subject of a flourishing trade. Full cargoes are shipped to the chocolate factories and the swelling army of nutlers or 'fruitarians.' The latter are surely one hundred per cent. American along with the realtors and morticians. If you do not know it, the realtor is a real estate agent, and the mortician not a cutter of mortises but an undertaker.

Our interpreter was Hassan, who joined for fun. He was born in Russia where his father had been a baker. Russia was the Eldorado of thousands of industrious Lazi artisans, especially bakers. Hardly a Russian town without its 'Turkish' bakery. Politics have now caused a return tide of emigrants. Hence the Russian language, our link with Hassan, will help one along even without a dragoman. More rarely, but still surprisingly often, a muleteer or shepherd will address you in fluent English of the Yankee brand.

Some, by habit, carried an ice axe, which is often nothing more than part of a uniform akin to the officer's sword. Without it they would feel undressed. Most of us used the long tent-poles for sticks. Unless ice must be expected, I have always stuck to my old friend, the hazel long and stout. There is nothing like it to save venerable fundaments from frightful impact of dishonourable earth. Mere fashion is responsible for the disappearance of the alpenstock. People seem to be afraid of looking ridiculous with it. I can see no technical reason for sacrificing a simple tool which combines efficiency with great comfort. The short walking-stick now affected by climbers on the Lower Alps can be made to do, but with far greater strain. As a lean-back and third leg the alpenstock is invaluable on any kind of broken ground to the limits of pure footwork, especially on steep slopes with grass and slabs—those sinister traps baited with edelweiss. Jumping a brook becomes child's

play. The alpenstock never catches when slung on the wrist. On the railway it worries far less than a pair of ski.

At first we followed the mule-track by which petroleum in tins from Batum is traded across the range to Anatolia. A paved road winds through a landscape reminding one of Alpine Italy, crosses a spur and then leads up the valley of the Asferos river where it sometimes loses itself among the pebble-flats. Paved roads are a necessity on the lower slopes, as without them pack animals would sink into the sodden clay.

Nowhere in the East have I seen so many bridges. Moreover those of Lazistan are permanent structures arched in stone, some a thousand years old, some new, for the art of the mason still survives along with the will to make a clean job of it. Road building here is probably an inheritance from the old Georgians, Greeks and Romans, whereas in Middle Asia we find nothing but ramshackle improvisations swept away by floods at least every other season.

In Lazistan neglect was due to the bad Ottoman government of former days, while poverty hampers speedy renewal. The country is full of the castles and churches of the Christian kingdom, but for obvious reasons only the bridges have escaped ruin. One can see that the new Turkey is making brave efforts in every direction, witness among others the excellent steamer service which covers the smallest ports.

Two days' sweating brought us to the Han Memish Pasha, a caravanserai on the long whaleback ridge of Demir dagh. A steep and miry ascent through jungle had brought us there. Paths show a general tendency to gain height as quickly as possible in order to reach firm ground. Ridges are preferred to the floor or sides of the valley. Also the air is more bracing and the sun shines more frequently.

After the Han one climbs another thousand feet or so to the open pastures following a garden lane through rhododendron bush of medium height. It is a sunken path. The underlying rock—namely, marl—is too hard for paving, yet too soft to resist wear, so that the traffic of ages has cut down to several feet below the level of the roots. And within this the feet of countless pack-mules have scraped deep and narrow gutters which they go on using until the loads bump against the sides. Then they start a new line of erosion, for the mule feels as we do with a bulging rucksack in a carriage door. Hence a twisting of gullies and ridges in the road.

Mist floated through the upper trees ; and through mist we walked for two days over the Skiddaws of Demir dagh the long-

backed. At Charankaya—meaning the echo-rocks, according to Koch—a small hut shelters belated or weather-bound travellers. Such intermediary hostels between the greater *hans* or hospices are necessary, judging from the graves, a little further on, of traders who have died in a blizzard. This along with huge avalanches bridging the ravine low down in the forest (in August !) hints at a vast measure of snow in winter and consequently at the nearness of a level of permanent glaciation.

The caretaker provides a fire and Turkish coffee for a few pence. Prices do not seem to rise here with height above sea-level, still less in exaggerated proportion. Some moral law, written or unwritten, forbids extortion by height.

We camped under some outcrops near the top of the ridge with Alpine moorlands stretching away on one side and low cliffs on the other dropping down to slopes covered with the knee-deep scrub of one of the hardier rhododendrons (*R. caucasicum*). Here I took the last watch, wherewith goes the duty of starting the kettle. I felt that I atoned for a life of sin when I pumped the primus at nine thousand feet in a murky dawn moist and chill.

Another march saw us on the Demir dagh pass where the mule-track dives down, making for the Chabantz dagh opposite, whence it finally descends to Ispir on the Chorokh. We awoke under a clear sky with the clouds curdled in the basins below. From here in less than an hour one gains the top of Demir dagh, the mighty hill (3100 m.). Thanks to a remarkable trick of nature we now enjoyed fine weather all the time we were on the mountains. The parties of several years confirm a horizontal weather level in August.

Somewhere about 2600 m., but most certainly above 2800 m., we leave the steam that shrouds the coast belt. This undoubtedly hangs together with the divide. South of the range the country becomes more and more arid.

Sending the animals round we cut across hill and dale towards a rough skyline which the map of the British War Office describes as ' sharp craggy summits forming serrated ridge ' and overhanging ' deep, difficult ravines,' showing how a few well-chosen adjectives can transfigure the non-committal features of a map into a land of promise.

This is the highest portion of the Pontic range stretching from here in a north-easterly direction towards Artvin. The highest peak, rising in the middle of this section, is Kavron dagh (3800 m.). We were bound for the granite cockscomb of

Varshambek (3560 m.) which stands sentinel over the south-western end.

From our next gap we overlooked the Hemshin yaila or headwaters of the Böyük river, a wide hollow with granite bosses, morainic dykes and glacial lakes. The glacial features of Lazistan show astounding proportions, sometimes equalling those in upper valleys of the Alps. At first sight this does not agree with an average summit-level of 9000 ft. in such a sultry climate. But moisture makes all the difference, as it does between Ruwenzori and Tibet.

If the spine of these mountains were bulgy instead of jagged it would assuredly wear a caparison of age-snow (névé, firn). But just because the geological skyline did not rise far enough above the lower limit of glaciation (climatic névé-line) it became dissected by corrie formation. Little ice fritters away; big ice polishes off. Rubbing with emery paper takes longer than chipping. Typical corries abound, many of them with a tiny patch of ice, large dumps of moraine and a tarn below. So far we know of two regular glaciers, not mere snowfields, which surprised the discoverers by their size. Their corries face south-east, that is to say towards the dry interior of Anatolia, probably because the snow drifting in from the Black Sea accumulates under the lee of the range.

We spent several days by the lake under the walls of Varshambek, whose granite ashlars gave excellent sport to our young guard. I pottered about, for my engine was not yet tuned up to a sufficient number of revolutions. Keeping up (more or less) with quick marchers is too short a cut to fitness when one turns sixty. Much as I adore granite, I did not consider my training sufficient for angles above 45°. A tired man is unsafe; or if he be safe, he will back out in time, having made sure of a line of dignified retreat.

Hassan with worms and a bent pin caught a big supper in the lower lakes. I recommend Lazistan to the leisurely angler-mountaineer. Excepting the highest lakes, he will find plenty of trout everywhere. The biggest swarm in the forest streams where they feed on what drops from the trees or from the rich soil that teems with crawling things.

We descended to Atina (Athens) by way of Hemshin and the gorgeous forest of the Böyük dere. On open glades the mammoth flora raised their spikes and umbels above our heads, the giant bear's-breech towering above the rest. They are old friends of the Western Caucasus.

At Atina a well-behaved crowd feasted on us while we waited

for a boat to be got ready. Clad as European nondescripts of subfusc hue they showed nothing in common with my warlike Ajars whom I treated forty years ago. The peaked cap is the almost universal headgear because it can be turned round for prayers. A half-turn has solved the age-old problem of how to shelter one's eyes while obeying the law of the Prophet. The women still go a-mumming, but here and there high heels tittupping under a shapeless outline again declare that true reform begins at the bottom, wherewith a perverted language points to the feet.

We partook of galaton, papadon or pop's (priest's) milk, a specification that covers debauch almost as poetically as mountain dew. Furthermore the port authorities gave us the correct time. Our watches however did not prove far wrong although we had nothing to set them by but Father. Whenever he woke up it was supposed to be five in the morning. I never saw a better demonstration of Einstein's irregularly moved system of co-ordinates.

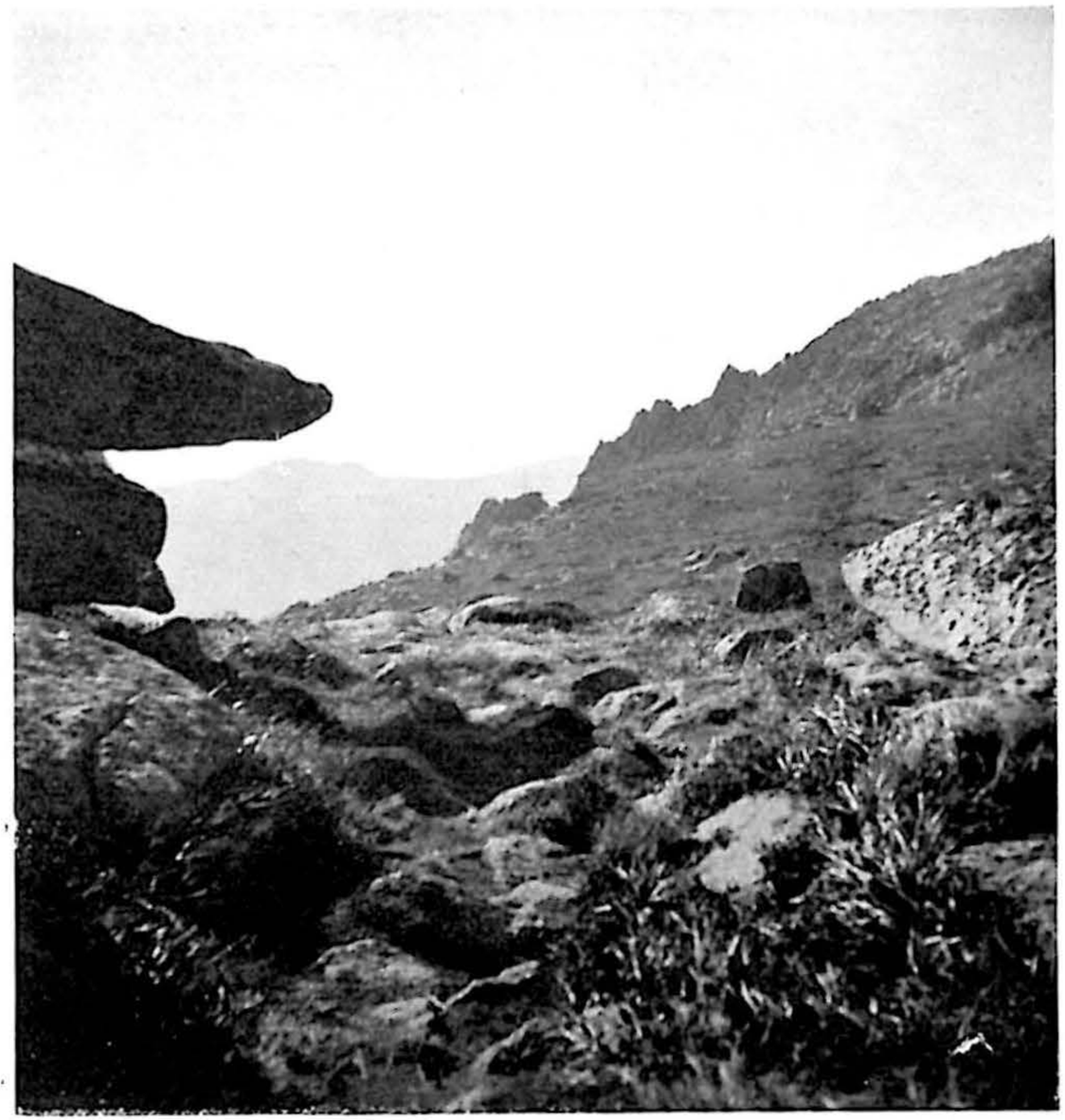
In a barge ignobly driven by petrol we set out for Mother Russia. We were spotted by searchlight off Batum and taken into port by two destroyers of the coastguard. Why not a torpedo at once or at least a little shell? An appalling fuss they do make.

The old mother of plenty seems to have been rejuvenated with the wrong glands, for she grabbed viciously at our modest funds, demanding four shillings in exchange for each rouble which has a buying power of about twopence by the ready reckoning of our stomachs. Fortunately we owned real values in the shape of wind-jackets, razor-blades and many other things the worse for wear but commanding a higher price in the market than brand-new goods from the factories. An old flannel shirt bought me a big loaf of black bread.

I ferreted out old Makandaroff, and the sight of him gladdened my heart.

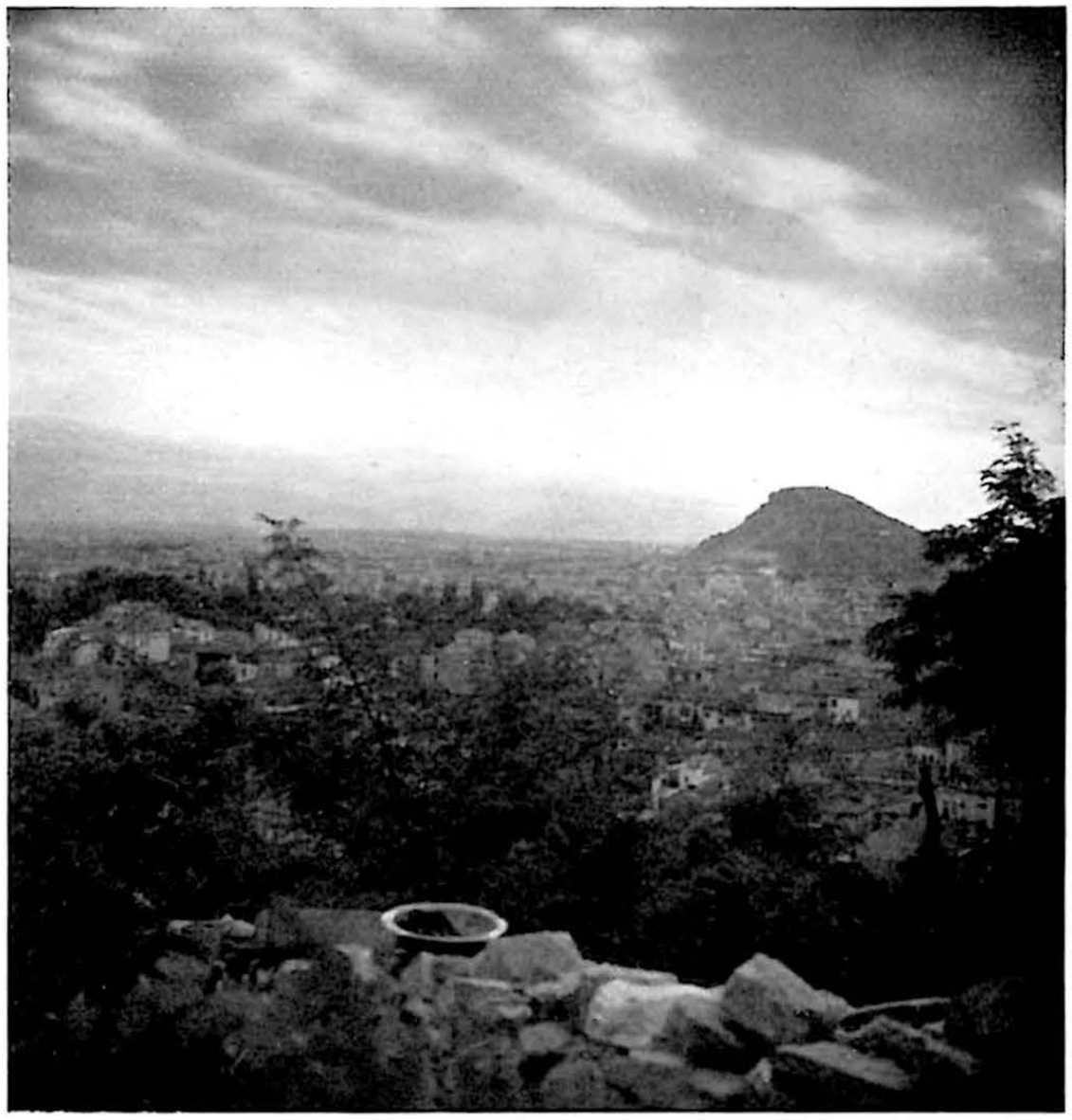
We had to watch our money so as not to run short, for on no account must we become dependent on charity. We wangled things all right. In Batum we received a wire from the German Consul at Odessa who reminded our leader of a long-standing invitation to supper. Glad acceptance placed us at a festive board where we did for three hundred sandwiches and thirty bottles of beer. I love, revere and honour that human Consul above all others. He has for ever reconciled me with the unfathomable secrets of foreign offices.

From here we pass through Bulgaria on our way to the



Photo, W. R. Rickmers.]

ON THE VILOSHA.



Photo, W. R. Rickmers.]

PHILIPPOPOLIS.

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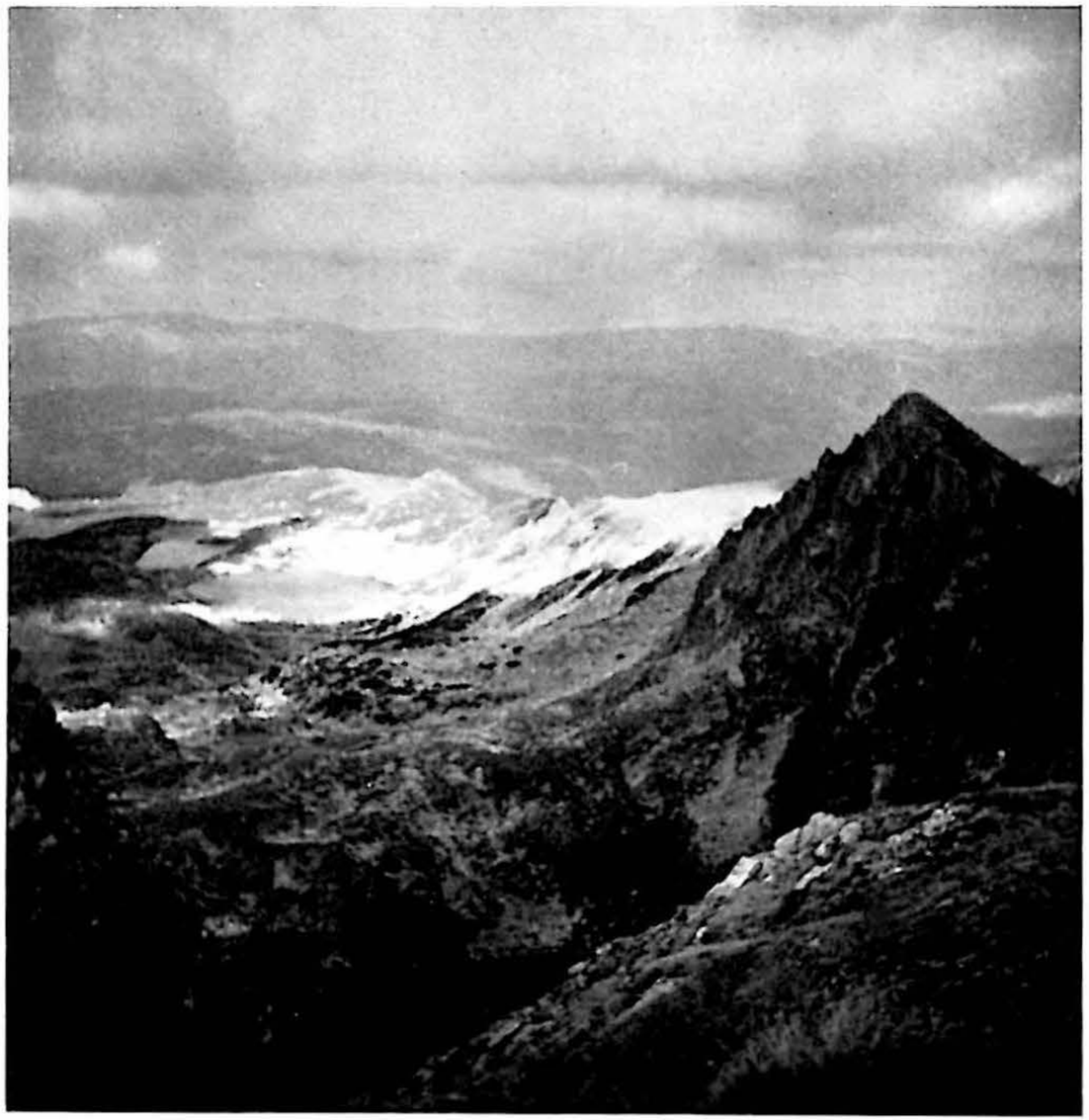

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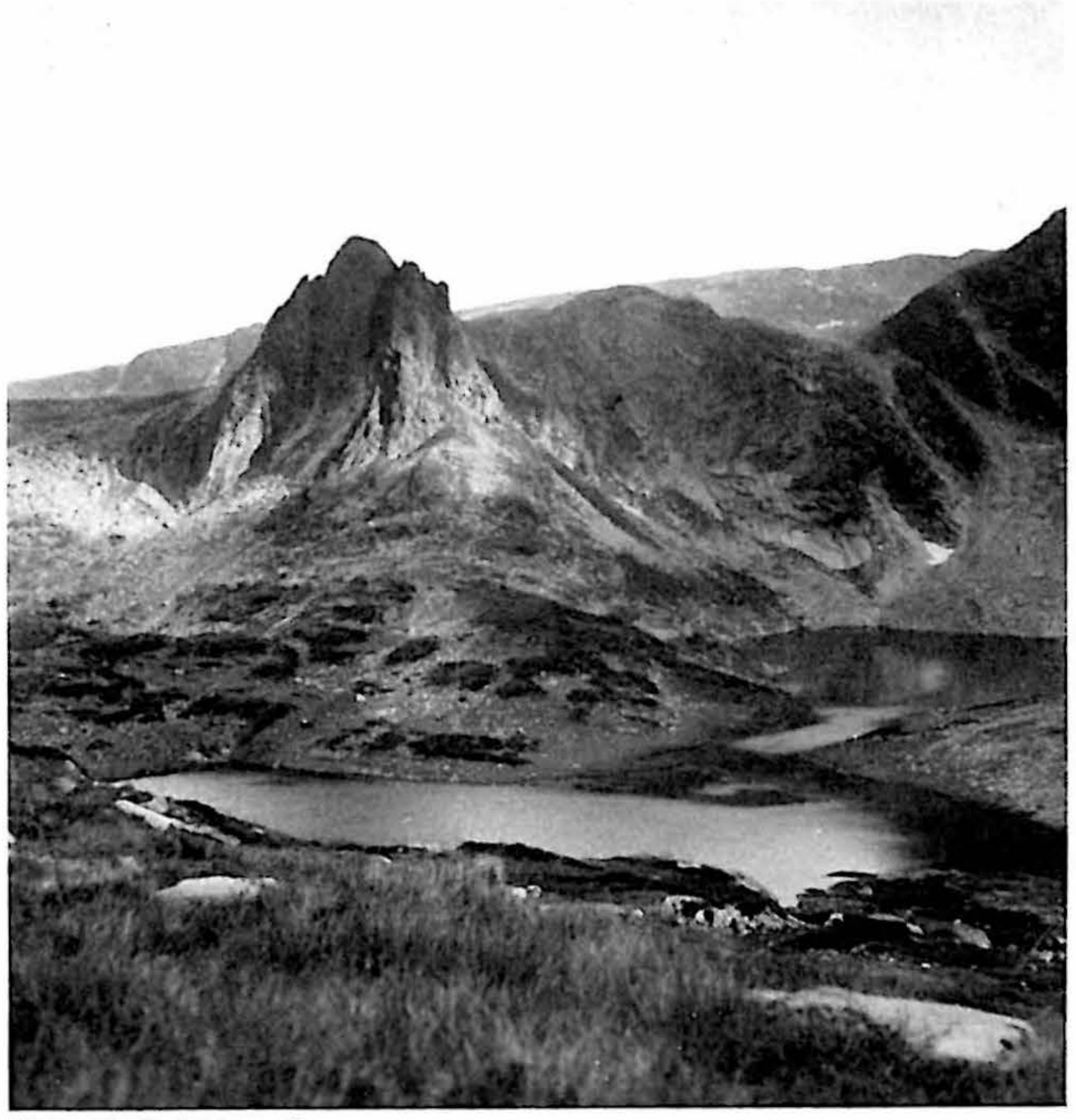

Photo, W. R. Rickmers.]

At The Seven Lakes (Rila).

Titlis. Last summer my wife and I received a commission to look into the possibilities of the tourist traffic in Bulgaria. We spent two and a half months in the country.

There are two long blocks of mountains, North of the river Maritsa we have the Balkans (highest is Yumrukchal,[3] 2375 m.) which the people call the Stara Planina or Old Mountain. The 'planina' is not a plain but the reverse. South of the national river runs the Rhodope system forming a horseshoe around the basin of the Mesta. Modern convention accepts three main groups, namely Rila, Pirin and Rhodope proper. The Rila mountains at the top of the bend are divided from their northern branch, the Rhodopes, by the defile of Elli-dere or Chepino (Yundola). The projected railway with spiral tunnels should settle the disputes as to the boundary between Rila and Rhodope. The low depression of the Predel Pass from Simitli to Razlog makes the Pirin or southern horn stand apart clearly enough.

Across the Struma river on the Serbian border the Ossogovo group with Mt. Ruen (2283 m.) completes the Bulgarian mountains for foreign visitors. To those who do not fear stray bullets as a possible cause of Alpine accidents I recommend the frontier hills towards Greece and Turkey. They should reveal much untrodden charm. We were overwhelmed with hospitality, not merely of the official sort for the sake of the travel business, but far more of the spontaneous kind. The climbing stranger is bidden a hearty welcome because the Bulgarians are a nation of mountain enthusiasts. They are also great patriots. To such a degree has the love of tramping, climbing and ski-ing pervaded every class, that one may speak of a mountain-patriotism which hardly distinguishes between 'our country' and 'our mountains.'

If the membership of the Tourist Association is not ten times bigger, and if there are not yet five times more huts, that is due to the great poverty of the nation. Very few people can afford nailed boots, not to speak of walking-suits. Yet they think nothing of those (usually) horrible paths strewn with roundheads and billiard balls. I came two or three croppers on them trying the light fantastic hop. Luckily my ankles again proved a heavenly gift although they complained of breaking strain.

Few capitals can boast of a mountain like the Vitosha (2287 m.) to the south of Sofia, and not far away. It is not merely a hill with a small top but a vast undulating plateau with granite tors set upon it. There is room for long tramps ;

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[3] Or Jumrukčal, pp. 159–61.

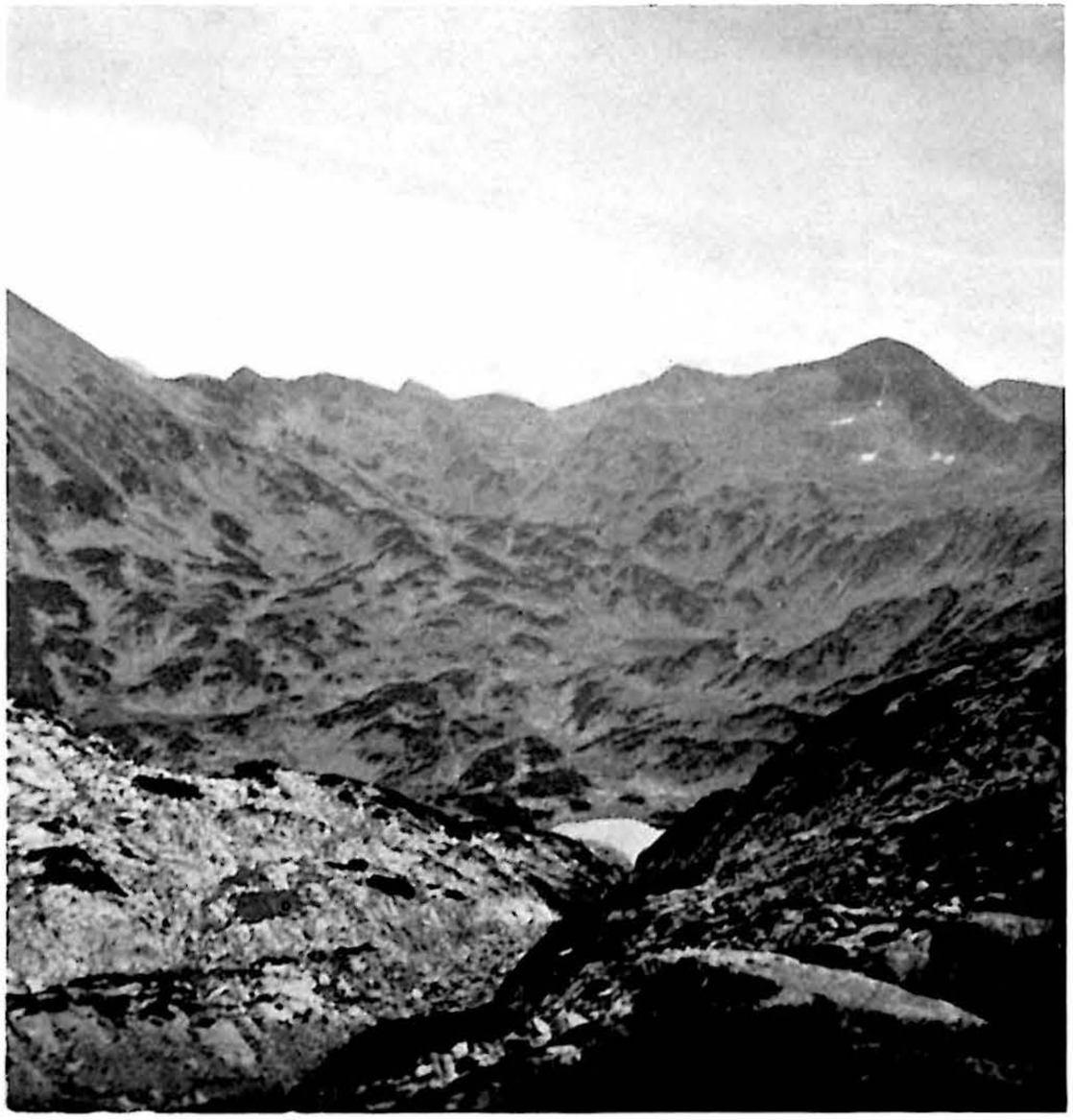
and for ski-ing these downs, sprinkled with pines, are of course ideal. The half-dozen huts are not too many.

Now on this Vitosha every 28th of August they celebrate the memory of the poet Aleko Konstantinoff, the founder of the Mountain Club. Last summer 5000—*five thousand*—people assembled around the highest point, the Cherny Wrkh, not counting those who had failed half-way. Remember that most of them had tramped the whole five hours from the city as they could not afford the tram across the six miles of dull and dusty plain to the foot of the mountain which has no railway or ropeway. As an example of mountain-worship this must be unique. Marriage on a peak is very popular. The young couple take a ' pop ' (priest) along—a sky pilot indeed.

Right at the beginning I was invited to the opening of the new hut under Belmeken (2646 m.) in the Rila or Rhodope (they are not yet sure which). First by train to Kostenets, a summer resort, where we filled every available bed. High jinks in a hall with women, wine and dancing opened the proceedings, which lasted the first half of the night. Then home, which in my case was an hotel with the enchanting name of 'Priroda,' that is to say 'Nature.' I do not scoff at the monkish but clean primitivity of the furniture. A traveller must either take the best a poor country can offer, or stay away. The alternative is one's own camp. But we may criticize a state of affairs for which poverty is no excuse, especially if one wishes to welcome visitors. Here as elsewhere south or east of Central Europe a glance at the Institute of Metabolism makes one thankful for a sluggish turnover. Why even the Bulgarians, otherwise an orderly and progressive people, cannot see to this matter, passes my understanding.

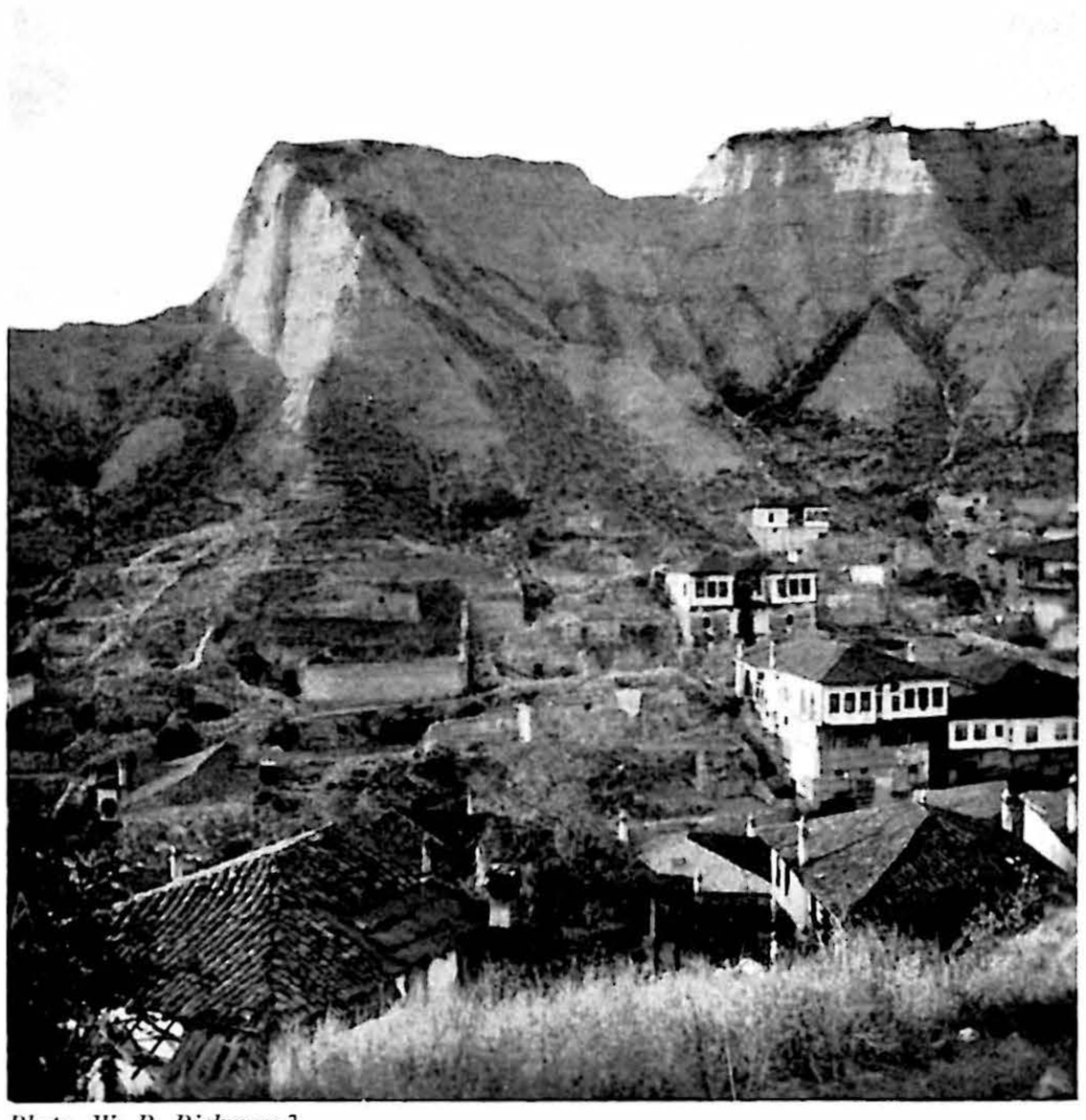
Among my bear-leaders was an Archimandrite whom only the day before I had seen clad in golden raiment reading Mass in the cathedral at Sofia. He came to bless the hut. Now he wore robes of sober black which he exchanged for plus-fours on the hill. I shared a room with him and felt glad, for I was vastly curious as to how an archpriest looked underneath his holy skirts. A most secular being in shorts was revealed to my gaze.

The great feature at five next morning was the total absence of breakfast and a polite confession of incapacity to provide anything so ludicrous. The Bulgarians are wondrously frugal. They start the day with nothing at all or at most with a piece of bread and a cup of Turkish coffee. They work and walk on an empty stomach until the midday meal. And they walk



Photo, W. R. Rickmers.]

PIRIN TYPE OF MOUNTAINS.



Photo, W. R. Rickmers.]

MELNIK.

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Photo, W. R. Rickmers.]

MUSALLAH, THE HIGHEST MOUNTAIN IN THE BALKAN PENINSULA.

fast. Their average to the hut was three hours, while I considered four a good performance, especially after the night before.

In that motley pilgrimage of four hundred I watched about a dozen unlikely females whom I should not have expected to outlive the comfortable promenade from Zermatt to the Schwarzsee. All of them arrived, and none the worse for wear. The belles of the Balkans are changing indeed. Hitherto I had only known them slippered in sleeping-gown, slouching and smoking, unless they happened to grace the boulevards done up to the nines and with the high lights put on. Let us take our hats off to the Bulgarians compared with whom we climbers in Switzerland are voluptuaries.

The red-roofed hut stands above the banks of a lake encircled by a wilderness of dwarf pines which are not stunted at all but almost make a forest. The Bulgarians build very good huts now. Some of the older examples still betray the naïve villa-complex that craves for prettiness. Traditionally a fine house standing in its own grounds must have a tower full-blown or at least rudimentary. It means waste of space and money and serves no useful purpose without an observation platform on top. One quite misses the pergola. Most of the huts have only been made possible by voluntary labour. Apart from the stones kindly supplied by the mountain, the members carry up everything, from timber and cement to beds and crockery. Local pride urges the villagers to lend a hand. The Junior Mountain Club has even taken voluntary afforestation upon itself. Every member gets his Sunday sapling which he must plant in some chosen area.

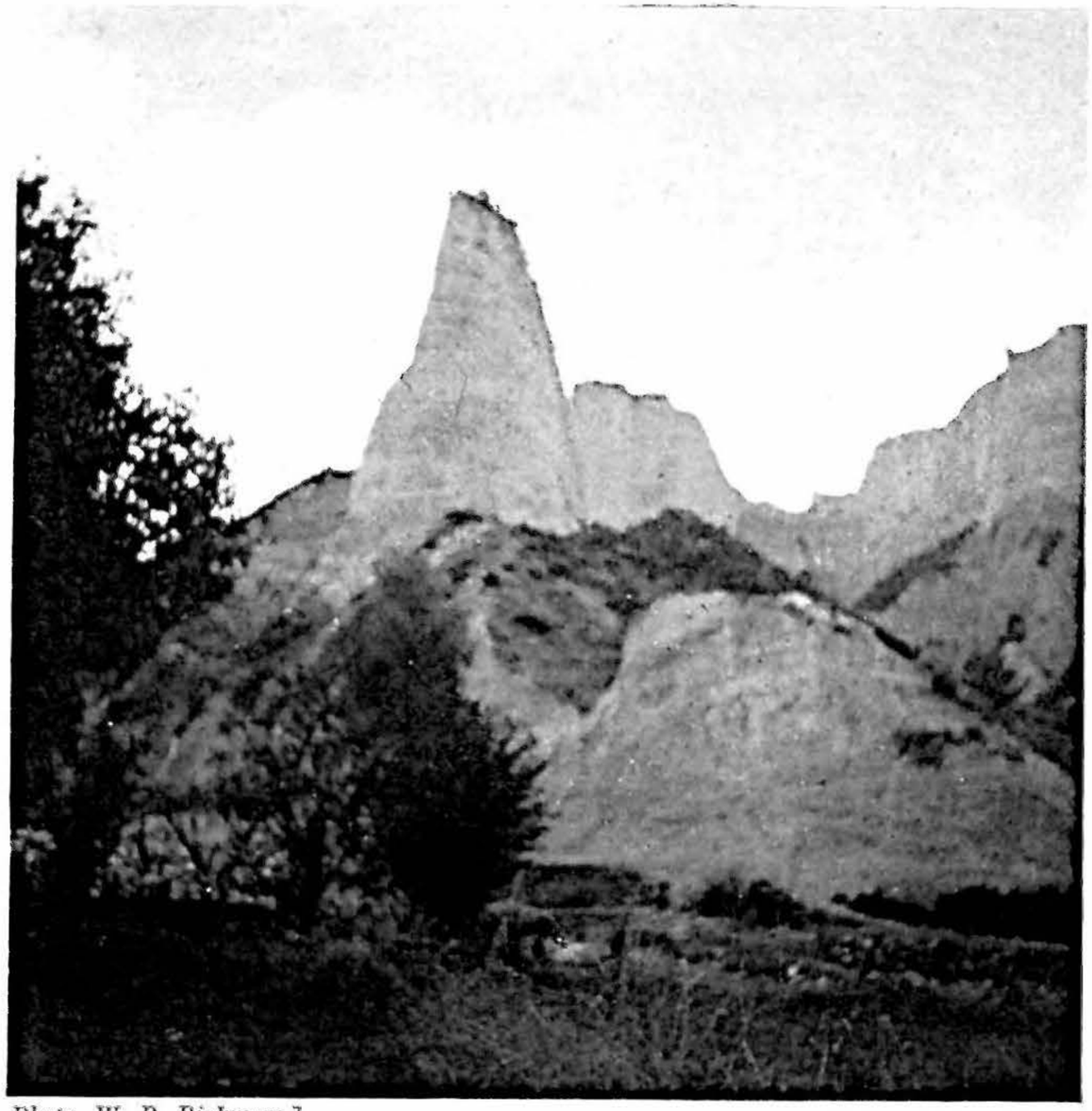
We began with a climb of Yumrukchal (2375 m.) and a long ridge-walk over the bumps of the Balkans accompanied or rather led by young Kristo Todoroff, a fine cragsman and ski-runner. Dr. Statkoff and Pavel Deliradeff showed us over the Rila. Professor Deliradeff is a tough campaigner and Bulgaria's grand old man of the mountains, which he knows in and out. After the war he led a band of liberty fighters in the wilds of Macedonia. His latest feat was the traverse of the Balkans from end to end, on foot. The Minister of War, General Kissoff, kindly and greatly helped us with a letter which enabled me to commandeer transport. Thus we saved time and gathered a fair sample of high Bulgaria. Rila and Pirin are lower Alps with an abundance of lakes, beech forest, copses of dwarf pine and lovely camping sites. There are neither glaciers nor snowfields, and I doubt if there is a single difficult peak, although one may find sheer walls and an occasional tooth.

There are about a dozen huts, but not enough yet to link up, so that one cannot ramble from stage to stage with a rucksack only. Furthermore there are no villages in the upper valleys and very few shepherds with milkable cattle. On the other hand, this favours the independent caravan-tramp. A party with camp kit and a couple of pack-mules should do very well and enjoy solitude in unfrequented spots. Food is wonderfully cheap in Bulgaria, and once away from the cities one can keep expenses very low. To this add the helpful willingness of the population. The country is safe, especially in disciplined Macedonia where evildoers have no earthly chance because the people police themselves. I do not remember meeting a policeman there.

We emerged at the lower end of the eastern Rhodopes, which are low hills covered with scrubby fir trees where you must be satisfied with the romance supplied by invisible hosts of bears and wolves. We saw Batak, the scene of the Bulgarian atrocities of 1876. Our last place before the railway was a town or village appropriately called Peshtera or Cave. There really is one, as we learned to our cost when the grottolarians of Grottoville dragged us through the entrails of a limestone hill. Upon our bellies did we go and mud did we eat and our heads did we knock against stalactites and stalagmites (slightly soiled and damaged). Still we thoroughly enjoyed it, for the enthusiasm of the lord of the manor who showed us round permeated us with the pleasures of gratitude while drops from above and pools below soaked us with water. The discomfort of the guided is the true measure of the trouble taken by the guide.

Bulgaria has at least a thousand mineral springs, big and small, hot and cold, but hardly any caves. Someone should see to this, for a holiday-land without sideshows underground is unthinkable. Man likes to swing above and below his normal level. Mines and caves are but negative mountains ; darkness is restful after light ; heaven is stale without the contrast of hell ; sin is the spice of virtue. Diving restores the human balance of the climber.

Do not miss Philippopolis (Plovdiv), built by an unknown genius on the modern principle of no room without a bath, which here means no house without its climb. For from the very heart of the city there spring many high knolls with excellent rock faces, slabs, chimneys and tempting ridges, just the thing for a bout in pyjamas before breakfast. Yet, strange to say, the best rock-climbers (petrolarians ?) do not



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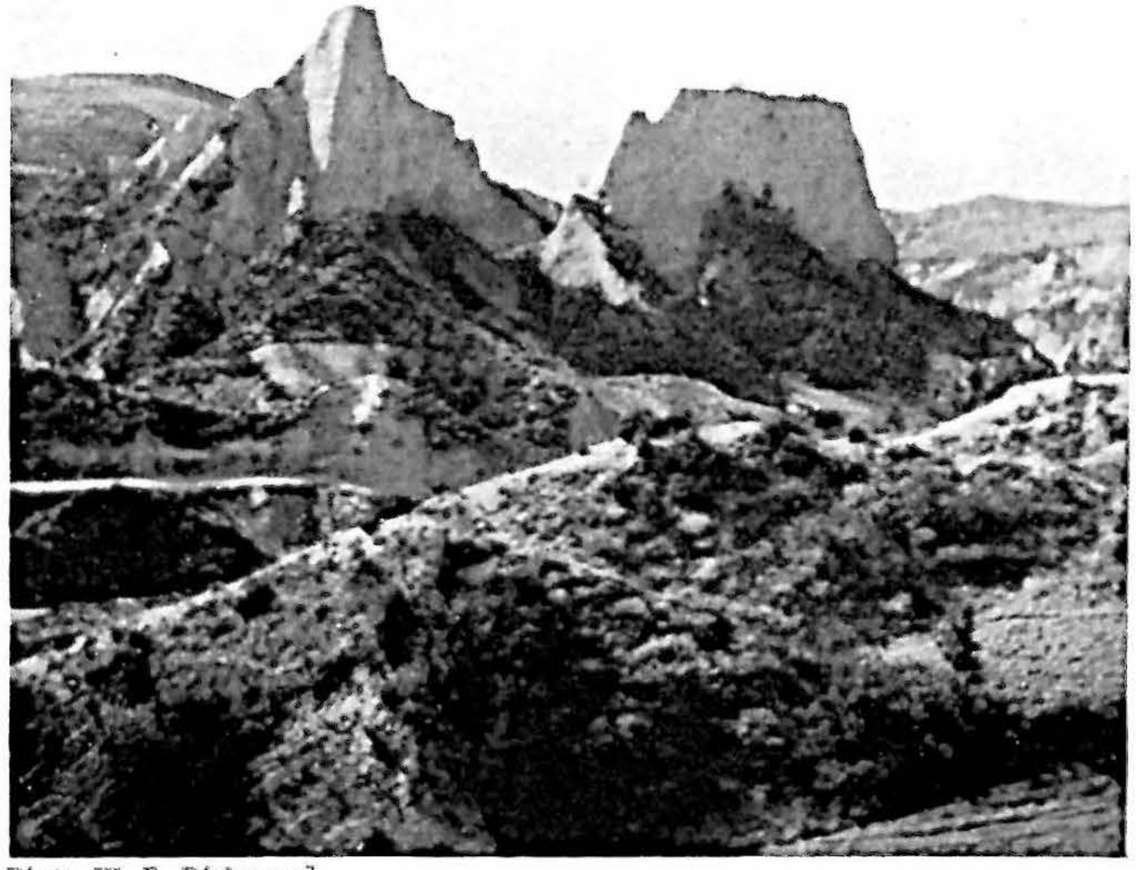

Photo, W. R. Rickmers.]

TOWERS OF MELNIK.

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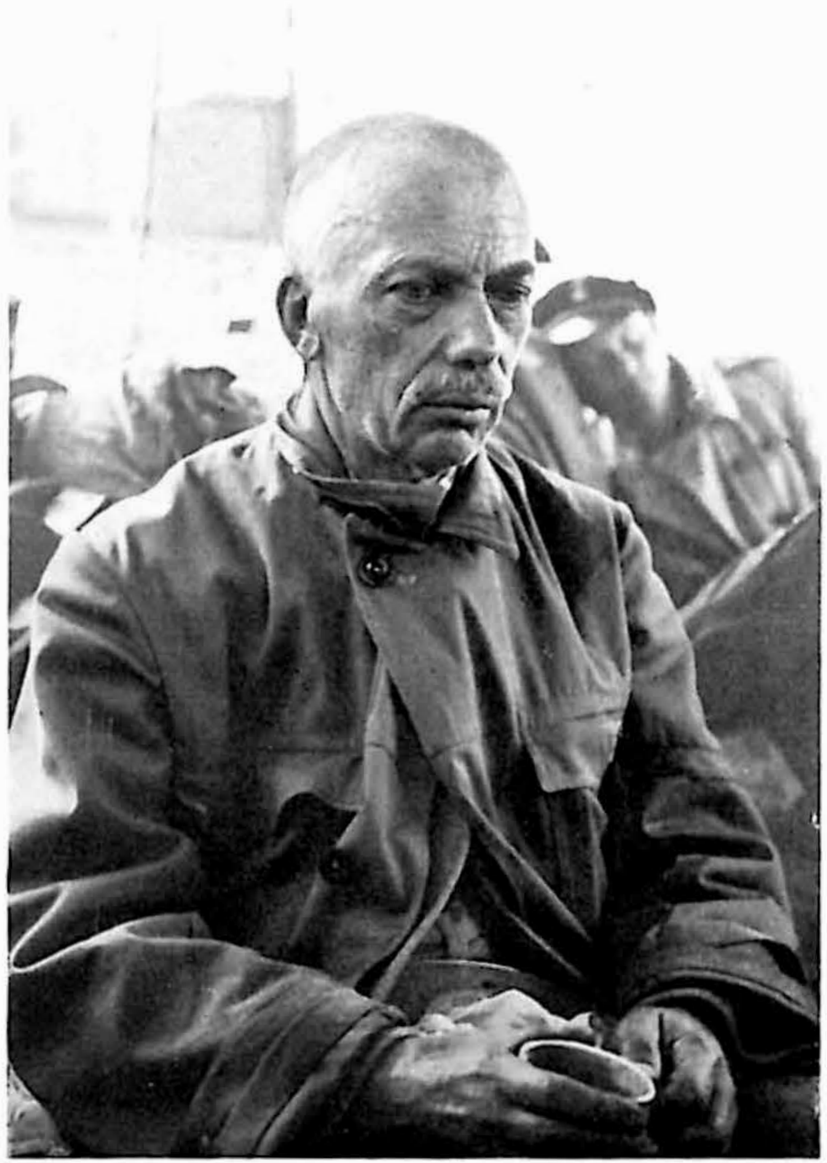

THE LAMA OF LAZISTAN.
(W. R. R.)

Photo, W. R. Rickmers.]

THE FAMOUS RILA MONASTERY.

hail from Plovdiv. Opportunity that maketh man lies in the middle distance of our field of view.

In Sofia we met Sonia Bakunin, a relative of Consul Peacock —a bridge across the gulfs of time and space.

Climbing in Lazistan and Bulgaria I leave to the imagination of the reader, who should be able to fill in technical detail from his own experience. The worst photograph tells him more about the landscape than a page of word-painting. I am no good at routine. Writers might well specialize, some saying *what* they saw, others *how* they see it. Some will describe the stage and the play; others throw spot-lights upon the scene. As a supreme test of literary ability I recommend an essay which mentions neither mountains nor climbs and yet is deemed eminently suitable for the ALPINE JOURNAL.

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Beyond the works of P. Deliradeff in the Bulgarian language and the volumes of the 'Bölgarski Turist' there is no mountaineering literature in the usual sense. Nearer at hand we have nothing but odd bits scattered over the journals. A comprehensive book on Mountainous Bulgaria awaits its author.

The Gangotri Glacier and Leo Pargial, 1933.

By C. WARREN.

(Read before the Alpine Club, May 8, 1934.)

TO those of us who live outside India an opportunity of taking a mountaineering holiday in the Himalayan range does not come every day in our lifetime, so when, towards the end of 1932, I received an invitation to join the Pallis expedition to the Garhwal Himalaya I had little difficulty in deciding to accept the pleasant offer of my friends—an offer which implied not only a chance of travelling in a strange country amongst interesting native hill-people, but also, as we hoped, of recapturing for once something of the thrill which the early travellers in the Alps must have experienced in those days when they were still comparatively unexplored.

From the very time of its conception it was decided that the expedition was to be kept as like an ordinary Alpine holiday as was compatible with the change to a broader and less cultivated field of mountaineering operations; and in order to maintain such an attitude it was at once decided that the members of the expedition were to do their own carrying on the mountains. Porters would, of course, have to be engaged to carry enough equipment to maintain us at a base camp for a period of one month to six weeks, but, with the exception of a few picked men who would be retained to run the camp for us, the others would all be sent back.

Obviously such methods of approach could only be applied to certain selected areas in the Himalaya; siege tactics must still remain the only successful method of attack on the giants of the range. So in the present instance a district was chosen in which the mountains were neither too lofty nor yet too difficult of access. The ranges round the Gangotri Glacier and the mountains near the Sutlej valley seemed to fulfil our